



## Window on Jordan

By Samaa Abu Sharar  
Star Staff Writer

**KING HUSSEIN** is back: Jordanians all over the Kingdom are delighted to see the leader of the country safe and sound. Jordanians proved once again their unconditional allegiance to the leader and father figure, His Majesty King Hussein.

The King's long awaited return gave us Jordanians more hope in the future. A future that seems at times gloomy because of economic difficulties that the country and the whole region is undergoing.

I observed with much interest the festivities that took place during the past few days. Being out of the country in 1992, when His Majesty came from his first cancer treatment, I repeatedly heard of the massive celebrations that took place at the time. Therefore, I was very curious to see how we would welcome our leader after his longest absence from the Kingdom. And believe me, I was not disappointed. From what I saw and heard it is definitely nothing short from what took place few years ago.

King Hussein is viewed by Jordanians not only as a King or a leader, but more of a father figure.

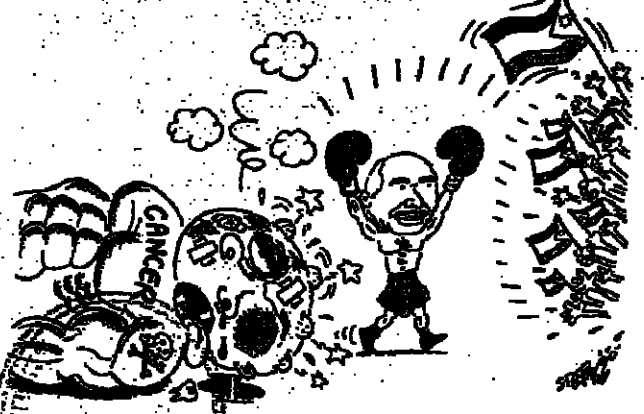
All in all, to the majority of Jordanians, Jordan is not Jordan without King Hussein.

So how did the Kingdom celebrate His Majesty's return?

Well, let's start with the streets, where all the action took place. The streets of Amman and especially those through which the Royal Motorcade passed were colorfully decorated. Cloth banners were all over the streets with welcome statements. I have to admit though that after reading a number of them—I made a point of

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KING HUSSEIN RETURNS TO JORDAN...



# The Star

Jordan's political, economic and cultural weekly

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Extends its warmest greetings to  
**His Majesty  
King Hussein**  
on his safe return home

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اسبوعية سياسية مستقلة

## King expected to name son as Crown Prince

### Prince Hassan to be designated Regent



Prince Hamzah



King Hussein



Prince Abdallah

By Ibtisam Awadat and News Agencies  
**AFTER HIS Majesty King Hussein's** long-awaited return to the Kingdom, Jordanians are now awaiting another important event, the naming of a new

Crown Prince as heir to the Throne. Upon his arrival, the King announced that the coming stage requires comprehensive review and evaluation, in order to take the appropriate decisions regarding the future of

the Kingdom. "Every now and then, we have to review and see what has to be done, to consolidate the future," the King told reporters at Marka airport Tuesday. At the same time, the King asked journalists "not to speculate and not to rush into conclusions."

The possibility of relieving His Royal Highness Prince Hassan from his duty as Crown Prince came as a surprise to the Jordanian public.

In an interview with CNN, a day after his return, the King stated—when asked if there were any plans to change his successor—that "I am not prepared to say anything, so please do not commit me to anything whatsoever because I have only thoughts and ideas."

The King praised the endless efforts of his brother Prince Hassan, the Regent, during his absence. The King added that "Hassan is not the sole focus of my attention at this stage," since the King's concern is to "give Jordanians reassurance that the future is love and cooperation and not intimidation," the King added.

While nothing official has been made public so far, news agencies quoted "reliable" sources as saying that the King has already informed Prince Hassan of his decision to

replace him as Crown Prince Friday. The same sources said later that the King met with the Royal Family on Sunday to inform them of his choice of Prince Abdallah, his eldest son, as heir to the Throne. The sources said that the Royal Family, including Prince Hassan, has supported the King's decision and his Constitutional choice.

Unconfirmed reports say the King plans to address the Jordanian people either Monday or Tuesday to announce his decision to replace Prince Hassan, 51, with Prince Abdallah, 37, as Crown Prince. The reports say the King will name Prince Hassan as Regent and will hand him specific responsibilities.

Experts say that if the King names Prince Abdallah as heir to the Throne, he will not need to make any Constitutional amendments, since the 1965 amendment supports the King's decision. Prince Abdallah was named Crown Prince in 1963 until he was replaced by Prince Hassan in 1965. King Hussein named his brother as Crown Prince in 1965 during a time of regional violence and a string of attempted assassinations against the King. Prince Abdallah, at that time, was only three years old. The 1965 amend-

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## Arab leaders jubilant over King's safe return home

By Ghassan Joha  
Star Staff Writer

**ALONGSIDE THE** Royal family, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh and Qatari Emir Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani gathered at Amman airport on Tuesday, 19 January, to welcome His Majesty King Hussein after six months of absence from the Kingdom.

The three Arab leaders arrived on this special occasion to welcome the King back home. Crown Prince Hassan received, early on Tuesday, the three Arab leaders at the airport.

The three leaders expressed great jubilation over the King's good health. They later left Amman to their respective countries.

Later on Wednesday, the King received two delegations



King Hussein receives Prince Mohammed of Dubai

Ben Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and UAE's Defense Minister, and Lieutenant General pilot Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahayan, the UAE Chief of Staff, accompanied by Minister of Information and Culture Sheikh Abdullah Ben Zayed Al Nahayan. Bahraini delegation was led by Sheikh Mohammed Bin Issa Al Khalifa, Chief of the Bahraini National Guard.

Both delegations conveyed to King Hussein warm wishes and regards from leaders of the UAE and Bahrain. The Arab officials also expressed their happiness over His Majesty's speedy recovery and safe return home and praised his role on the regional and international level.

The King thanked his Arab guests on their kind gesture for coming in and sharing with the Jordanian people the celebrations over his return.

Furthermore, King Hussein received telephone calls and cables from different Arab and foreign leaders upon his return home. Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, King Hassan of Morocco, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Saudi King Fahad and his Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, congratulated him on his recovery and return back home. The King also received calls from Israel's President Ezer Weizman and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Sultan Qabous of Oman are expected to

arrive in Jordan later this week.

On the other hand, French President Jacques Chirac sent His Majesty a message in which he expressed his happiness over His Majesty's safe return to his people.

President Chirac also welcomed the King's forthcoming visit to France later this year, saying that France is very proud to receive the King who touched the hearts of the French people with his determined efforts to save the Middle East peace process.

The President added that he and his wife have a deep appreciation and true affection to Their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor.

Good-will cables from several leaders were also sent to the King wishing him a long and prosperous life in leading his people and country for years to come.

Cables came from King Fahad Ben Abdul Aziz of Saudi Arabia and his Crown Prince Abdullah Ben Abdul Aziz, and from Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmed Al Sabah. Presidents of Iran, Venezuela, and Uzbekistan also sent cables of congratulations to His Majesty.

The King hailed Arab and foreign leaders who visited and contacted him during his treatment at the Mayo Clinic.

King Hussein left the hospital late last month after six months of intensive chemotherapy treatment from cancer in the lymphoma glands.

The King arrived to Jordan from London where he stayed for two weeks in recuperation.

Moreover, King Hussein told reporters at the airport that he deeply appreciates Arab leaders who visited him in the United States during his treatment.

The King praised in particular President Hosni Mubarak, Libyan leader Mu'amar Qaddafi, Prince Abdullah, King Hassan as well as leaders of Algeria, Tunisia and other Arab countries.

King Hussein paid tribute to foreign leaders who met and maintained contact with him during the past few months.

## Future economic perspectives

By Ghassan Joha  
Star Staff Writer

**SOON AFTER** His Majesty's return, experts conveyed diverse opinions regarding the economic status of the Kingdom.

"I think that the upcoming months will witness a development in the economy after the King's return," Dr Hani Al Khalili, an economic expert, told *The Star*. He said that the King's plan to change his successor will promote foreign investment in local markets.

Al Khalili added that "such promotion is needed since the national economy is witnessing an ongoing recession, because of His Majesty's long absence outside the country."

Moreover, King Hussein's long ailment urged a good number of people to transfer their bank accounts from Jordanian banks to foreign ones, and some replaced their savings to US dollars. "About \$200 million were pulled out of the Kingdom during the past six months," Dr Maher Al Waked, an economic analyst, explained. He hoped that by the end of this year, all transferred deposits will be put back in Jordanian banks and invested in local markets.

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## Iraq to seek support from Arab foreign ministers

By John Daniszewski

**CAIRO—**In a potential turning point in Iraq's relations with its neighbors, the Iraqi foreign minister addressed the largest gathering of Arab foreign ministers in eight years Sunday and asked for a united Arab stance to lift sanctions and condemn US airstrikes.

However, Mohammed Said Sabah will face an uphill battle at the Arab League "consultative" meeting. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait still feel bruised by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's 1990 occupation of Kuwait, and Hussein's recent comments urging the overthrow of governments that support US policy has only added to their unease with the Iraqi regime.

All Arab countries have said they want to see at least an easing of the sanctions that have inflicted suffering on the Iraqi people. Yet many remain leery of Hussein, and they do not want any relaxation of sanctions to result in material benefit or a

moral victory to his regime.

Iraq already seems to have suffered one defeat: During a series of intensive consultations leading up to the meeting, a call to convene a full summit of Arab leaders on Iraq was apparently put on ice.

The foreign ministers' meeting originally was intended to pave the way for such a summit, but the league's secretary general said in a published interview Friday that the idea of a summit will probably not be discussed because of objections by Saudi Arabia.

Arab League Secretary General Ahmad, Esmat Abdel Meguid said Saudi Arabia has already stated that it will not participate in any summit attended by Hussein.

Instead, Sunday's meeting is expected to produce a "balanced" statement that would include criticism of the US-British airstrikes in December and oppose the continuation of sanctions in their current form. The statement also is expected to

call on Iraq to confirm its recognition of Kuwait's borders and to pledge good relations with it and with other Gulf states, and to respect UN Security Council resolutions. The pan-Arab daily newspaper *Al Hayat*, said a draft resolution prepared for the meeting will ask UN Secretary General Kofi Annan to seek an outcome that will eliminate Iraq's weapons of mass destruction and the sanctions that have been imposed.

Sixteen Arab foreign ministers, plus lower-ranked representatives from four other Arab League member states, have confirmed they will attend the meeting.

Abdel Meguid said it was the largest such gathering of Arab foreign ministers since 1990. Interviewed by *Al Hayat*, Abdel Meguid said Arab ministers realize the difficulty in finding a consensus over the divisive issue of Iraq.

"The Arab ministers are perfectly aware of the problems standing in the way of common Arab action," he said, with the

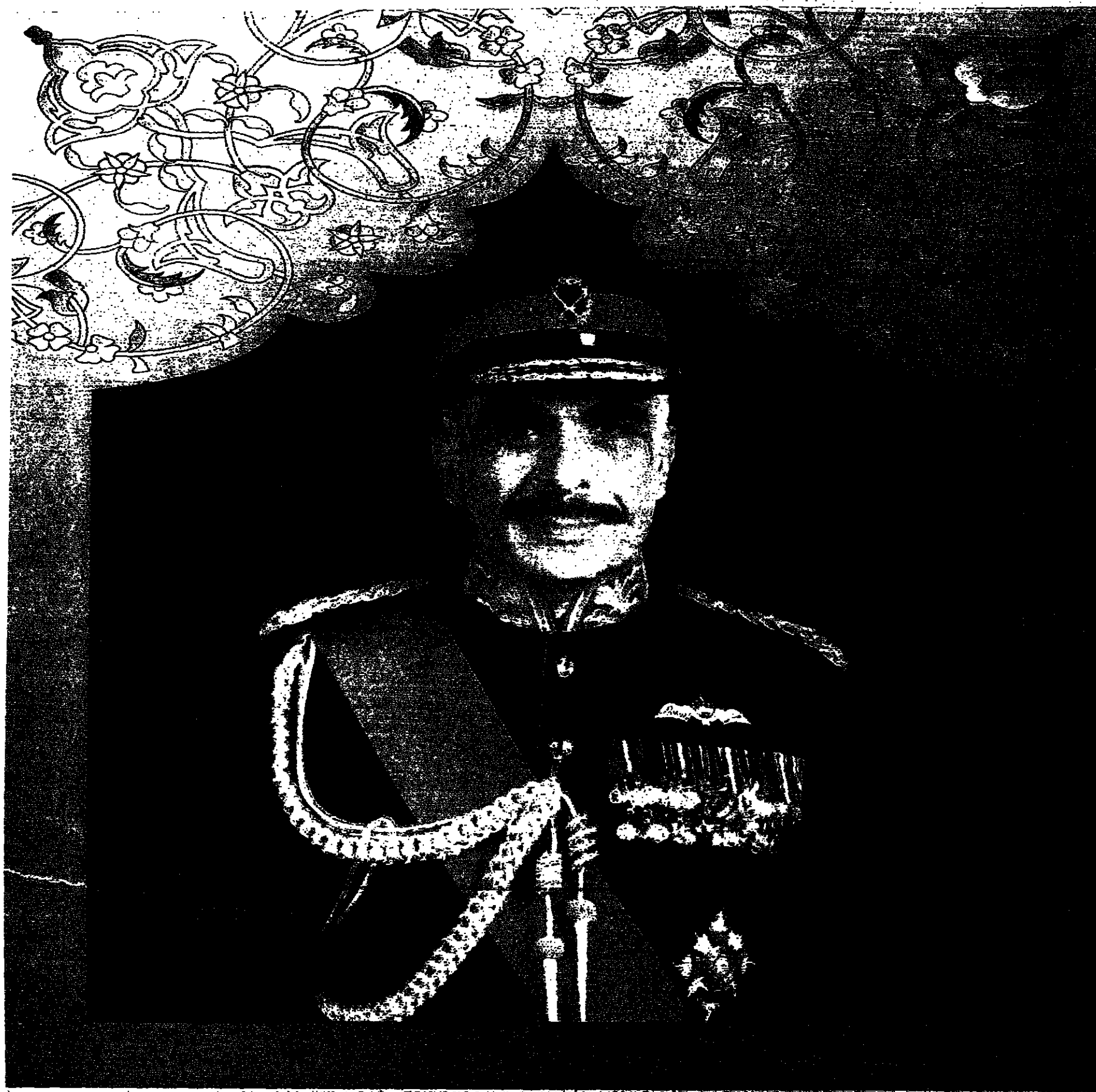
meeting being "a good chance to talk in all honesty and objectivity about ways to get out of this crisis."

Sabah has attended several of the twice-yearly Arab League foreign ministers' meetings in recent years.

However, Iraq has not been allowed to attend a full summit of Arab leaders since the Persian Gulf War. Baghdad had hoped that Sunday's meeting would open the door to such a gathering, which would symbolically represent Iraq's readmission to the Arab fold.

It is apparently not to be. According to Egypt's semi official newspaper *Al Akhram*, "The general feeling among Arabs is that the time is not suitable for an Arab summit, and there is no room for the Iraqi President to attend such a summit after his recent statements urging Arab masses to revolt against their rulers."

LA Times-Washington Post News Service



*May God Save  
and Bless you*

ARAB BANK



البنك العربي



# Historic reception of King on his homecoming



HRH Prince Hassan welcoming His Majesty upon his arrival at Marka Civil Airport.

**Star Staff Writer and news agencies**  
WITH TREMBLING lips and frigid body, Ahmad Saleh, stood in heavy rain and chilly wind, waving the Jordanian flag in one hand and holding a poster of His Majesty King Hussein in the other, while he anxiously waited for the King's motorcade to pass by the Third Circle.

"Yes, I am shivering. Yet, I want to see the King no matter what," the 12-year-old Saleh said.

Saleh was among thousands of Jordanians who patiently lined up the streets of Amman Tuesday to see King Hussein after a six-month period of medical treatment in the United States.

Upon their arrival at Marka Civil Airport, their Majesties, King Hussein and Queen Noor were received by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Mohammed, Crown Prince Hassan, Princess Basma, Princess Sarvath, the King's sons and daughters and other Royal family members.

Also there to receive him were Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifeh Al Thani, who arrived to Jordan to personally congratulate the King on his safe recovery and return home.

The King was given an official reception at the airport and then greeted government members, senior officials and dignitaries.

Speaking to the press the King said he was thankful to God for his recovery and safe return. He paid tribute to Arab leaders who came to his reception or had called in before to enquire about his health. He said the coming phase will require comprehensive review in order to strengthen national unity and create a sense of security for the future. He also praised the government and its efforts during his absence and paid tribute to his deputy Prince Hassan.

He also paid special tribute to Queen Noor for her support and patience during his six-month medical treatment.

Few days before his arrival the King sent a televised message recorded in London to the Jordanian people.

The King reiterated his pride of the Jordanian people and talked about his own personal struggle against ailment. He promised a comprehensive review of our



His Majesty King Hussein saluting Jordanians in the streets of the capital Amman

national march and of all the issues and challenges.

News of the King's return were announced earlier by the King's deputy His Royal Highness Prince Hassan. Extensive preparations and early celebrations were held as Jordan embraced its leader on the historical day of his homecoming.

Streets and buildings in Amman and other cities and towns were decorated with colorful lights and posters of His Majesty while people danced and hailed their long awaited King.

Upon his disembarkation from the plane, which he piloted from London, the King, dressed in a dark suit and checkered kafiyeh (headdress), stood for a moment of tranquillity, before kneeling to pray, thanking God for his safe return and recovery.

King Hussein accompanied by Her Majesty Queen Noor left Marka Airport in a motorcade heading to Bab Al Salam Palace, through the streets of Amman, where hundreds of thousands of Jordanians—holding national flags and pictures of the King—lined along the main streets of the city, to have a quick look at the King.

Shopkeepers offered sweets and spiced black coffee to passersby, folk troupes twirled swords and played bagpipes, women and children defied bad weather conditions and cheered as King Hussein waved to his jubilant people. Bedouins and tribal leaders slaughtered sheep and camels along the sideways.



A group of Jordanians performing folklore dances in celebration of His Majesty's return

"I am amazed with Jordanians' love for their leader, to the extent that they left their warm houses to see their beloved King," Sami Qasem, a Syrian businessman, said. "It's really a historic event," he added.

Along with Jordanian television, the

arrival of the King was carried live by major international networks.

The King received cables of good wishes from various Arab and foreign leaders. On this occasion the government declared last Thursday a national holiday.

## Jordan celebrates the arrival of 'The King of Hearts'

Lubna Khader

Star Staff Writer

**CELEBRATIONS** ON the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's return to the Kingdom—after six months of cancer treatment at the Mayo Clinic in the US—continued with high enthusiasm all around the country. The long awaited event was celebrated by all Jordanians all over the Kingdom.

The Jordanian public, from all age groups, participated in the event on Tuesday, January 19, by enduring rainfall and cold weather to receive King Hussein. Jordanians in different governorates in the Kingdom celebrated their beloved King's return home.

Children in the governorates carried pictures of the King, while women carried flowers and balloons and distributed sweets to the crowd in the streets. Young men carried flags, sang national songs and danced folkloric dances.

In Amman, around hundred thousand Jordanians crowded the streets of the Royal motorcade with Jordanian flags and posters of their Majesties King Hussein and Queen Noor, while singing and dancing with security forces in celebration of the joyful event. Tents were



put along the way of the Royal motorcade where groups of Jordanians gathered around and drank traditional Arabic coffee. Flowers and sweets were also distributed to the excited crowd.

In Zarqa, all main streets in the city were lit a day before the King's return. Government departments were decorated with huge pictures of King Hussein, lights and Jordanian

flags. The city also lived a display of fireworks during two days.

Jordanian citizens decorated their cars with King Hussein's pictures and toured the city while honning and waving their flags and hands in the air. Abcer Hamdan, carrying the King's picture, said that "it was a great moment when I saw King Hussein returning home."

Mohammed Atieh, a student standing under the rain, carried a banner that read "I love King Hussein."

According to citizens in the north, Eid El Fit was doubled with His Majesty's return home safe and sound. In Irbid, despite heavy rainfalls, thousands of people swept the streets of downtown and marched to Al Hassan Sports City for the celebrations. Several buses were put under their disposal to transfer them to the capital to welcome the King.

When King Hussein's plane touched the ground, thousands of Jordanians in the southern city of Ma'an got down to the streets cheering and chanting

for a long and prosperous life of their beloved King.

Many were also seen performing "dabkeh" dances in the streets and were joined later by Ma'an Folklore Group. Tents where set in the streets where big crowds gathered to congratulate each other on the King's safe return home. In other southern governorates, thousands of Jordanians in Tafseleh and Kerak also celebrated the events.

In the city of Salt, the celebration had a different taste demonstrating real Arab hospitality. Several banquets were prepared for the occasion. The traditional Jordanian meal "Mansaf" was prepared, and men gathered in numerous tents, which were held for the occasion.

Khaled Al Faori, said that this day is a national wedding. He added that King Hussein is a great man that is respected all over the world.

The festivities which were launched a day before the King's arrival to Jordan continue in different areas around the Kingdom. Thousands of Jordanians will go on celebrating the return of the "King of Hearts."



## Forever hopeful

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doing so at every traffic light or whenever I was sure that there were no cars behind me if I slowed down—they looked boring! Why? Because they lacked originality, and to top it all, they were repetitive. It seemed like if you read four or five banners, you do not have to read the rest!

Street lights also decorated the streets, especially the long street that links the Third Circle to the Fourth. Actually, it looked really nice, very christmasy! A friend's little boy said innocently when we were passing through the street that it is a shame that the King came during the day since he was not able to see the street all lit up. His mom comforted him by saying that His Majesty must have passed it and saw it the way we did.

Another important aspect in the celebrations that took place was of course our acclaimed Jordan Television. I do have to admit that JTV has visibly made extensive efforts to cover the occasion,

but I also have to say that the coverage was extremely boring. The coverage of His Majesty's arrival was generally speaking, OK, despite repeated technical problems encountered while covering the live event. Everyone was waiting to see the King, thus everything was excusable. The second day though, was another story. The coverage of the event which started in the morning and continued till late at night was very monotonous, long and uncreative. It was one guest after another and they all seemed to say the same thing despite their different professions! Callers turned out to be poets who composed verses and recited them on the air! We Jordanians seem to be born poets, everyone seems to know how to write a poem and recite one, it's just amazing. Songs and folkloric dances also had a big share in the coverage. I believe that any coverage of any event should be more creative and more entertaining for the viewers, because after all, it is done to be watched, I assume.

Moreover, the most important and genuine aspect of the event was without any doubt, the people of this country. Very spontaneously, Jordanians in different areas around the Kingdom jammed the streets to share with each other the joy over His Majesty's return and the relief over his recovery. They ran in the streets holding flags in one hand and big posters of His Majesty in the other.

They sang and danced in the middle of the streets, preventing at times cars from passing by. Unfortunately drivers that were struggling to make their way through the crowd also joined in the celebrations by sounding their horns either in honor of the event or to desperately get pedestrians out of the way!

Young and old, men and women were all there. Imagine Jordanians smiling! Well they were really smiling. I have never seen so many Jordanians smiling like that day. We Jordanians have a reputation of being very hospitable, but we are at the same time accused of being

too serious. A conception well based, since Jordanians have a hard time smiling or being a bit on the relaxed side. We appear to be rigid and tense. The return of King Hussein to the Kingdom, however, broke the rule. His Majesty was able to do what others have failed to do. Jordanians who swept the streets of the capital were not only smiling, they were even giggling. While I was crossing the Eighth Circle on that day I overheard a young man all smiles telling his friend "I swear I would not be as happy as I am today if my own father was coming back."

Rumors of changes have been heard by citizens, mainly through foreign media and slightly by the local one. The return of King Hussein to the Kingdom is apparently bringing several changes to the country. All Jordanians are impatiently waiting to see what changes are to be made by the Monarch and how this will affect our vulnerable future, which desperately needs a push forward. ■



# Nasser Ad Deen Al Nashashibi King Hussein via Middle East scope

By Rasheed Al Roussan  
Star Staff Writer

TIME AND again, history remains a secret, an unraveled parable, where stories of leaders and unsung heroes are interwoven in endless narratives of triumph and defeat. Nevertheless, amidst all the drama of human mixture of tragedy and eminence, there are people behind the curtains, who witnessed the scenes of history and decided to step out into the arena, and write. Those people are mirrors of the past, present and future. They are historians, intellectuals, writers and artists who dedicated their life for the sake of tackling and navigating history, in search for truth and justice.

Their benevolent voice traveled the world, condemning the follies of man and celebrating his victories.

Unfortunately, many were swept away by the claws of time, and many remained till our day, recording snapshots of human achievements.

Nasser Ad Deen Al Nashashibi, the acclaimed historian, journalist and author, is among the few, who marked their political and religious visions all around the world. His timeless dedication to the Palestinian cause and Middle East affairs made him one of the celebrated intellectuals of our time.

On the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's awaited arrival to Jordan, after a six-month period of treatment at Mayo Clinic, Al Nashashibi expressed his deepest regards for His Majesty's recovery and return

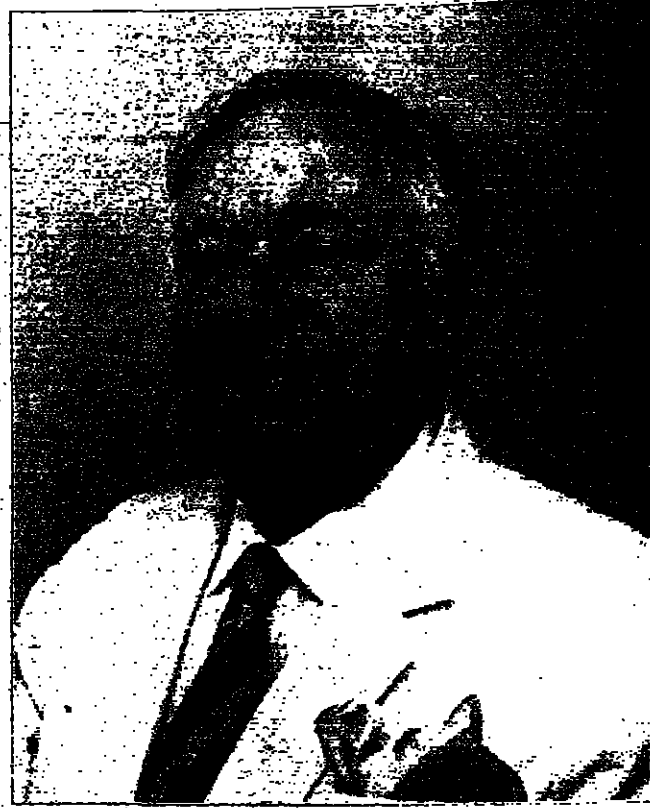
to his people. "The King will encounter many responsibilities and affairs, which are ignored by many, like the peace process, the Iraqi dilemma, the continuous mass massacres in Algeria, and the diverse Arab opinions regarding the Pan Arab Summit," he said. It is well known that His Majesty never failed to face any problem, and tackle it on an international level," Al Nashashibi added.

He also shed light on some of the most important current events in the Arab region, "the ongoing disagreements between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Desert, the Yemen incident of tourist killings, and President

Although we are standing on the thresholds of the 21st century, Middle East affairs remain unsolved, and some are forgotten even. However, Al Nashashibi believes that if Arabs reach a point where they can make "drastic changes" in the future of the entire region, we will regain our strong stand in the international community. "Unless we start heading towards drastic changes in the way we live, think and learn, nothing will change," he stated. "Unless we come to live by the codes and ideals of human rights and democracy, Zionism will linger on all over our countries, and we will remain a disgrace amongst the world's nations," he concluded.

As someone who witnessed countless changes in history since the era of His Majesty King Abdullah, President Jamal Abd Al Nasser and many others, the famous historian calls for freedom and democracy. "It is time to stop nagging and bragging and face the coming century as another hopeless phase in our lives, as if we lost a child that will return". Moreover, from a profound political vision, he stressed that all these issues highly depend on the unknown fate of the Iraqi dilemma.

Moreover, his Majesty is keen as always to carry on with his essential role as a leader and a peacemaker in the region. Nashashibi believes that His Majesty's vision, intuition and patriotic love and dedication to the Palestinian cause, in particular, and the Middle East affairs, in general, have



Al Nashashibi

always marked him as one of the most eminent Arab leaders.

Furthermore, Al Nashashibi's pen never ceased to write on freedom and independence in almost every article and book he published. His patriotic love and dedication for the Palestinian cause is ongoing, and vivid as never before.

His latest book, entitled *Muhammad Isaf Al Nashashibi: the laureate of the Arabic language in the eyes of Arab authors*, is a thorough review of various articles and eulogies on one of the most famous scholars and poets of the Arabic language, Muhammad Isaf Al Nashashibi. This

came as Al Nashashibi felt that it was time to celebrate his uncle, Muhammad, after 50 years of his death. "I believe that there were intended wishes from some to ignore Muhammad Isaf Al Nashashibi's indispensable role of enriching the Arabic language with new linguistic and poetic idioms; in addition to his captivating talent as a poet. Also, we are heading towards the declaration of a Palestinian state, where people must nourish and celebrate their cultural heritage, and especially in the city of Jerusalem," he pointed out.

All in all, "We remain convicts, and not warriors!" Only time will tell. ■

## Our Say...

### Safe homecoming

His Majesty King Hussein's safe homecoming last week, after six months of absence during which he underwent successful treatment for lymphatic cancer in the United States, was celebrated not only by jubilant and grateful Jordanians all over the Kingdom, but by regional and world leaders alike.

The King's role in regional politics and stability is underlined once more. His historic contributions to the causes of nation building and peace, among many others, make him one of the most unique figures of the 20th Century.

Jordanians see the King as a father figure, a charismatic leader and as an inspiration. During the past five decades, he was able to transform Jordan into a modern and vibrant state, one that strives to implement the rule of law, contribute to regional stability and play its role in regional and international politics.

No wonder millions of Jordanians held vigils to give thanks for the King's recovery and return. The King's return to assume his responsibilities comes at a crucial phase both internally and regionally. On the home front there is much to be done as the country struggles to deal with political, economic and social challenges, as it prepares to move into the next millennium. In his last address to the nation from London, few days before his homecoming, the King made reference to a comprehensive review of all issues pertaining to the future of Jordan and the well being of Jordanians.

It is now evident that such a review will include the issue of Royal succession. Constitutionally, such a sensitive matter falls with the prerogatives of the Monarch. As Jordanians await new revelations on this matter they are confident that the King's decrees will be based entirely on preserving the national interests of Jordan.

We are sure that the comprehensive review will not be limited to the issue of succession. The King has always sought to find ways to secure and bolster the survival of Jordan's political and economic institutions under pluralism, democracy and free market principles. Many of these institutions came under pressure and are in need of urgent reform. Regionally, Jordan's role in the peace process and rebuilding Arab solidarity cannot be underestimated. The King's pivotal contribution to the cause of Middle East peace was remarkably demonstrated during the Wye River negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis last October.

These talks are once again at loggerheads while Israel prepares for general elections and the Palestinians ponder the declaration of their independent state in May. There is no doubt that in the coming weeks and months, the King will hold important talks with fellow Arab leaders on the issues of Middle East peace and Iraq among others.

Jordanians have a lot to be thankful for. The King has always been a symbol for the nation's well being and great ambitions. His recovery and assumption of his responsibilities have eased our anxieties and put the nation back on the road of development and growth. We join millions in offering thanks to God Almighty for the King's safe homecoming. ■



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reads a letter as he sacked Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, 23 January, who has threatened to mount a political challenge outside their Likud party. Mordechai, a 54-year-old former general, has kept Israel in suspense for weeks over whether he will turn against Netanyahu, 49, the man who launched his political career in 1996. Reuters

## A view from America

# Is the person of God chosen or lured?

By Carrie Nelle Moye

IN THE religion in which I was reared—and in all religions, I thought that those who were going into the ministry, or the priesthood, or becoming mullahs or rabbis, did so because they felt themselves to be called by God.

Naturally there always were those who entered the realm of religious leadership for other reasons like being exempt from the draft for another few years (in bygone days) or whatever. But for the most part, I felt young persons (read that young men) who chose this path as a career were sincere believers, believers in whatever it was they believed.

Now we are told that the Roman Catholic church in the United States, with its emphasis on celibacy, is into the recruiting business, not recruiting for membership but recruiting for priests. Whoa! Something is amiss here. If one has to be "recruited" into the ministry, is this person someone wants as a part of its clergy?

If the Catholic church is experiencing problems in filling its positions, isn't it more prudent to examine why than to resort to recruitment policies?

If celibacy is a requirement and not enough young men can adhere to this requirement, it does not mean that celibacy should be abolished. If, indeed, the leaders of the church feel within their hearts that abstinence from sex remains a tenet as interpreted by Catholics as what is necessary, then it would be hypocritical to change the policy for the sake of convenience.

But isn't it just as hypocritical to stoop to recruiting spiritual leaders? How does the Catholic church deal with its female members who feel they have been called of God to teach the gospel? To date, the top leaders, i.e. the Pope and followers, feel this cannot be. Not being a Catholic, I can not take a learned position on that matter, but as a human being, I would think that one who is called of God to perform a mission is just that, called by God.

In my way of thinking, this should take precedence

over man (versus human) made laws. Besides being a deeply emotional experience, religion is an interesting experience and an interesting topic of study.

When living in Utah, the heart and home of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon) Church, I made a personal study of its beliefs, for never had I known any Mormons. Although there were differences

in my own beliefs, I felt that those of the Mormons were as easily acceptable as were my own. I had just been reared differently.

Of course, the LDS church, like my own conservative Protestant sect, did not believe in women elders being (their leaders). In fact, the policy in the 1960s did not allow persons of color to be elders. Miraculously, a few years later, the First Elder had a vision which revealed to

him that blacks could become members of the upper hierarchy. Thus far, there has been no such revelation regarding women. Nor has there been in the church in which I was reared.

The same remains true regarding orthodox Judaism and Islam. Of course, there have been protest movements in all elements of Christianity and Judaism. If there have been in Islam, I am unaware of such. But none, it seems to me, has resorted to recruiting young men to become a member of their respective clergy.

Doesn't such overt advertising for the souls of these individuals rather negate the purpose of their being in such positions in the first place? Certainly, it denigrates the position. I would be most uneasy if I felt the person who was the titular leader in my most private of personal beliefs were one

who had been lured into the position.

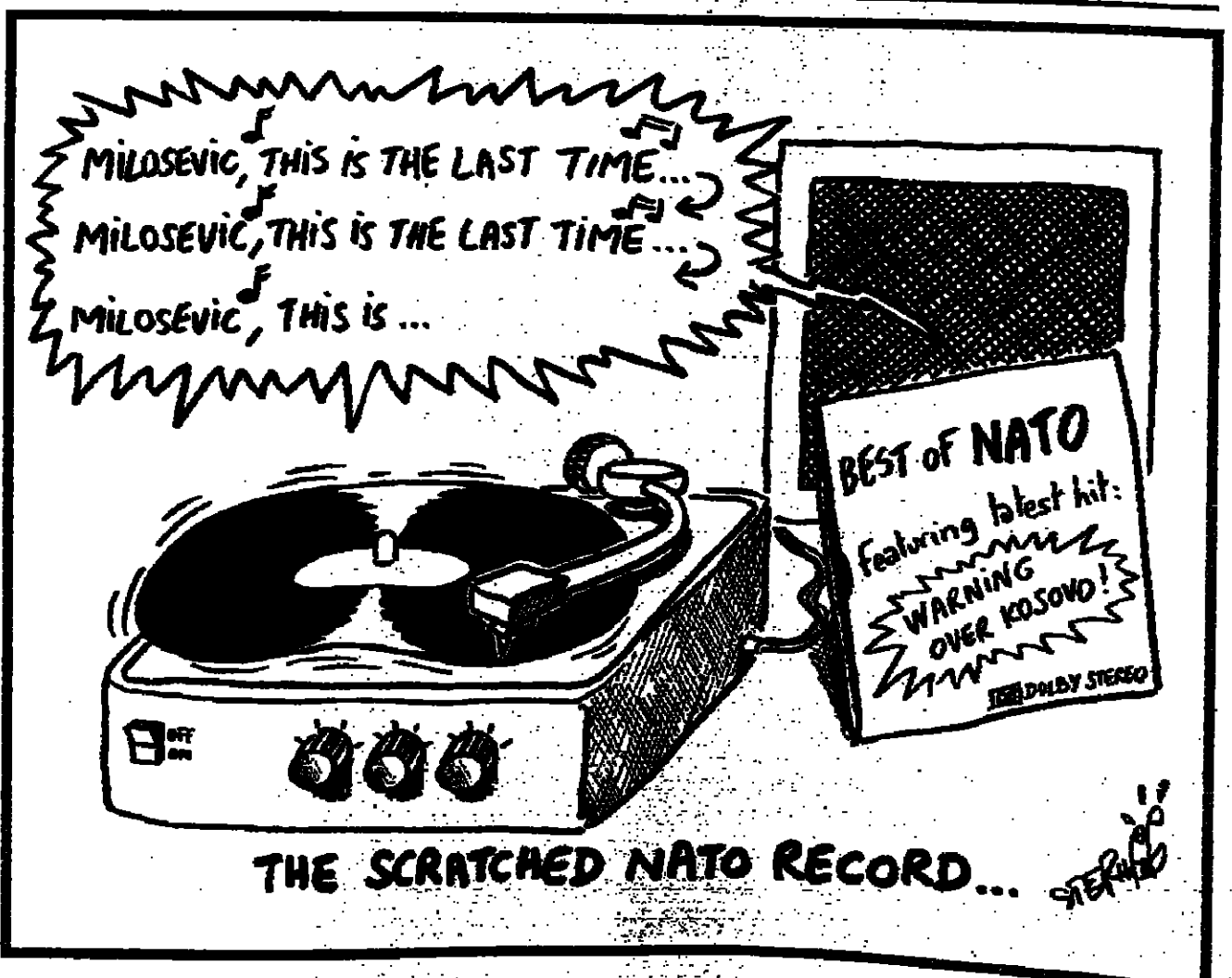
There are enough problems within the clergy—any clergy—without the added burden of overt secularism. Just imagine in one's younger days how emotional a pull religion was, or if one were to be so inclined in one's life, it most usually occurred in one's younger days. Of course, in times of stress and in times of feeling one's immortality these feelings might well have returned.

But just imagine the person who felt called to serve as a church leader and who, ten years down the road, felt the zeal had evaporated. It must take the faith of Job to overcome the trials of Job.

Not many have it. And certainly I would question the spiritual strength of one who had been lured into the profession by overt advertising.

Just how overt was this advertising, been? In Milwaukee, Wisconsin, there are billboards referring to "the World's Greatest Boss." In Providence, Rhode Island the Catholic church has gone on MTV seeking young men who might "hear the calling." If it takes MTV for one to "hear the calling," I would be very curious as to just who was doing the calling. And then there are those parents who are not concerned with whether or not their children are called to serve God but rather are concerned that they are having too many demands placed on them vis-a-vis assigned homework in their schools. But that's another column. ■

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25 JANUARY 1999

W O R L D

THE STAR 5

# Cairo cursed by plague of traffic

By Howard Schneider

CAIRO—The scene in front of the traffic department shows why driving in this city has become a 3-mph exercise in gridlock that foreign drivers rate as among the world's worst. In an example of how chaos begins at home, an ostensibly one-way street hosts a steady flow of two-way traffic, all under the unimpeachable eyes of policemen at the building's entrance.

Adding to the scene a hundred-foot-long stop sign at the intersection, the red light that everyone ignores, the double- and triple-lane left turns, the illegal left turns and debris-filled roads. Spice the mix with donkey carts, horse carts, bikes and load-bearing pedestrians, and it is easy to understand the sentiments of police Lt. Ahmad Assem, part of a broad government effort to create a new era of order on this mega-city's streets.

"Things in Cairo have reached the point of suffering," he said. "If our program falls back, I hope I will live somewhere else."

Arabs are famous for their hospitality. But on the roads of Cairo, it is every man for himself.

Unsnarling Cairo's traffic mess is a monumental task, but also an essential one in the view of World Bank analysts, who recently estimated the cost of Cairo traffic jams—in lost wages and other disruptions—at hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

That does not count the financial and social costs associated with accidents, pollution, lost investment and traffic injuries and deaths. If things get much worse, local officials fear, the city's traffic could start driving away tourists and foreign investors.

Consequently, the Cairo municipality is investing in major road improvements and confronting, not for the first time, the legendary disdain of its residents for traffic rules.

A "ring road" encircling Cairo is to be completed within two years, and a recently opened bridge across the Nile has eased travel from the city's southern neighborhoods to the northern areas near the Giza pyramids, and beyond to Alexandria. Trips that formerly required a drive through downtown traffic now take only a few minutes. Out-of-town taxis, and other public vehicles, must park in

lots outside the city, where their passengers get local transport to the center of town.

In addition, a new tunnel beneath the city's central bazaar, site of some of Cairo's oldest Islamic architecture, promises to ease one of the worst traffic choke points and help turn that area into a more pedestrian- and tourist-friendly space. There are also plans, Assem said, to create 35,000 downtown parking places.

But the city's best hope may rest on a less expensive fix—the Denver boot, which now can be seen clamped on entire rows of illegally parked cars along the Nile Corniche and other slow-moving roads.

Steps like that are every bit as important as better roads, said World Bank transport analyst George Tharakan. "Getting control of the internal streets is a question of telling people you cannot just park your car where you like. The ordinary person needs to become aware that he can do things to improve the situation—not parking in the wrong place, not making an illegal turn."

Tharakan was among a group of six analysts assembled by the World Bank who, at the request of the govern-

ment of Cairo, spent two weeks studying the city's traffic in November.

"It's about as bad as I've seen anywhere," Tharakan said, noting that on the streets of the city's main business areas, average vehicle speeds hover around 3 mph. That compares to about 20 mph in a "well-functioning" city, he said.

With about a million cars registered in the city, Cairo's infrastructure by some measures is adequate and improving, he said. About 25 percent of the city's surface area, for example, is devoted to roads—a reasonable figure.

But a critical shortage of parking places and the willingness of police to let motorists do as they please mean much of that space is occupied with parked cars, waiting cars or cars traveling in forward and reverse.

"They have abandoned maybe 60 percent of their road space," he said.

Salah Bassily has seen the effects of Cairo traffic as an emergency room physician in a local hospital. Although an estimated 200 people die in traffic accidents on Cairo's streets each year, he said he is surprised the accident and injury rates are not higher. In



a sense, he said, Cairenes have developed driving and street-crossing instincts that can bewilder outsiders.

"We have all grown up like this," he said. Crossing such Cairo roads as the Corniche "would be suicide for you. For the Egyptian, it is like a big adventure."

That is a situation Assem said he and the others at the Cairo traffic office are determined to change. Along with booting cars, the government is increasing fines, rerouting traffic and posting extra patrolmen to enforce the rules.

In addition, he said, the

city is trying to carry its message of road safety and order into the schools. The next generation of Cairo drivers, he hopes, will be better trained.

"When there is such a bad situation with traffic jams, you can't expect people to abide by the law. They get angry

and do what they want to do," he said. "We try to tell (the students) that, yes, a lot of laws are not enforced, but when you become drivers, you should abide by the law."

LA Times—Washington Post News Service

## War is the monster lurking under beds of Kosovo children

By Peter Finn

VUCITRIN, Yugoslavia—The subject of the lesson was fear.

The teacher, Flanza Pula, asked the 15 children, ages six to fourteen, to stand up, close their eyes and mill around the center of the cramped room. Some, with an innocent defiance attested to by their slap-happy grins, could not keep their eyes shut.

For others, the confusion, even staged, was too real and too frightening. After a few moments, finding no trust in the darkness, their eyes blinked open in a hurried search for comfort.

"When I was walking with closed eyes I was afraid we were running to the mountains and that the enemy was chasing me," said Minire, 14, her face angular and startled.

The pain of Kosovo's children is whispered in troubled silences and shallow smiles. It is shouted in wakeful nights and wet beds. It is realized in play where they yell "kill!" and in drawings whose frequent theme is the violence that visited their villages.

"It isn't fair that my country is always burning," said Kumrije, 13.

An eight-month Serbian offensive last year against ethnic Albanian rebels seeking independence for Kosovo, a province of Yugo-

slavia's dominant republic of Serbia, left tens of thousands of ethnic Albanian civilians homeless and more than 1,000 people dead.

An uneasy peace, punctuated sporadically by skirmishing between the two sides, has descended on Kosovo since an October agreement between U.S. special envoy Richard C. Holbrooke and Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. In winter's relative quiet, aid workers, teachers and doctors are tending to the trauma of the conflict's youngest victims.

In a sitting room in a private residence in this town northwest of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo, they are discovering that the mark of war is as pronounced on the mind of an 11-year-old as it is on the blackened, skeletal remains of farmhouses in villages just a few miles away.

"I'd like to call my fear shaking," said Astrit, head bowed. "I feel my fear all over my body." This workshop, part of a program called Smile Keepers, run by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), has reached about 700 mostly displaced children in the last few months. That is a tiny percentage. About 65,000 Kosovo children, for instance, missed school for an extended period last year because of the war, and thousands of them witnessed military action.

UNICEF would like to extend the program to 20,000 children this year—if the war does not return. So far there are no Serbian children in the program, a fact that UNICEF hopes to change this year, although the workshops are almost certain to remain segregated between ethnic Albanians and Serbs.

Ethnic Albanians outnumber Serbs in Kosovo nine to one. "I remember in one workshop we gave the children three wishes," said Hikmete Khara, a program assistant with UNICEF. "One six-year-old boy's first wish was for lots of toys. Then he asked to stop the war and to be together with his friends again."

UNICEF and other aid organizations have not compiled figures on the extent and depth of the mental anguish Kosovo's children have endured. In one group of 100 children, ages six to nine, who found refuge in Pristina, about 20 had severe post-traumatic stress disorders and are receiving psychiatric help, Khara said. Among the others, many had bed-wetting problems, suffered from nightmares or were jumpy at sudden noises, like a dropped dish or a slammed door.

"And if they hear shooting they become very frightened," Khara said.

Children in the village of Kisha Reka play in rubble left by Kosovo's warfare. Many children have stress-related ailments.



## Crime, labor unrest on rise in China

By John Pomfret

BEIJING—As economic conditions begin to worsen, China's Communist leadership is facing a growing problem of internal security, manifested in a soaring crime rate as well as in signals of a broader restiveness around the country.

Over the past two weeks, state-run media have reported three bombings that killed more than 21 people. A gang of masked thieves suspected of robbing jewelry stores throughout central China engaged in a dramatic shootout with police in the middle of Wuhan, a city of seven million people. And a human-rights organization said a tax revolt by thousands of farmers in Hunan Province on 8 January left one protester dead and scores injured when police suppressed it.

Communist Party sources said that last year more than 5,000 protests—in cities and the countryside—severely taxed China's massive security services. Meanwhile, Chinese experts have been quoted in the state-run press as saying China is facing its most serious crime wave since the Communist revolution in 1949. Narcotics seizures are the highest ever. So are slayings of police officers.

The reports, collected over several weeks, seem to underscore the fears of senior Communist Party officials that 1999 will be a difficult year for China. The Asian financial crisis has begun to bite here, slowing the country's rate of growth and raising the level of unemployment in major cities. Discontent with corruption within the Communist Party also is growing, triggering unrest.

Few, if any, analysts believe that China is tottering on the brink of a political breakdown. But the events of the past two weeks, coupled with a smattering of statistics released recently by the official media, paint a picture of a country with serious crime problems, a disgruntled population and no readily available means to improve the situation.

The reports follow one of the Communist Party's toughest crackdowns in years on dissent. Four dissidents were sentenced last month to 10 years or more in jail for attempting to establish an opposition political party, the

China Democracy Party. That party succeeded in forming preparatory committees in 23 provinces and was attempting to register in 14 provinces and cities before China's security apparatus smashed it and arrested its organizers, who are veteran dissidents. The ability of the China Democracy Party to organize so quickly surprised the Communist Party and Western diplomats and was an indication of the depth of discontent felt by many Chinese.

The main ingredients in the current round of strife appear to be the economic slowdown

any, the Changsha city government issued an order prohibiting attacks on state organs and blockages of traffic," according to a recent edition of the Hunan Economic Times, a state-run paper. It said that during the first 10 months of 1998, unemployed workers, angry at not being paid unemployment benefits, blocked traffic on the main boulevards of the provincial capital more than 60 times—a rare acknowledgment of the extent of urban unrest.

Throughout the country, labor unrest is expected to increase with the economic decline. The official China Daily reported last week that 16 million city dwellers will not be able to find work this year—11 percent of the urban work force, and one of the highest percentages of unemployed since 1949. Another 120 million inhabitants of China's countryside are also out of work, and many of them have traveled in search of jobs, leading to social problems and crime waves.

Crime, after corruption, is fast becoming one of the main worries of city dwellers. Over the past two weeks, Chinese have been treated to a number of shocking reports.

Crime, after corruption, is fast becoming one of the main worries of city dwellers. Over the past two weeks, Chinese have been treated to a number of shocking reports.

Shortly after sundown on 4 January, a gang burst into a jewelry store in the Wuhan Square Shopping Center, stole about \$300,000 in jewels and then unleashed a fusillade of gunfire at police during their escape. Two police officers, one soldier and three passersby were wounded. Last year, 442 Chinese police were killed and 7,735 injured while on duty, the Public Security Ministry reported earlier this month.

On 6 January, in northeastern Liaoning Province, a prospective thief blew up a bus, killing 19 people in a botched robbery attempt. The suspect had hoped to rob passengers after knocking them out with a controlled explosion.

He was arrested and has confessed, official press reports said.

Sunday, again in Hunan's Changsha, a man believed to be a rural migrant ignited a bomb on a bus that injured 37 passengers, including three who lost their legs, the New China News Agency reported.

Last Wednesday, four people were injured in a blast in the southern city of Zhuhai. Official press reports said an "unidentified object" exploded near a downtown bus stop.

LA Times—Washington Post News Service

LA Times—Washington Post News Service

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## Book delivers uncomfortable message to feminists

By Mary Jo Kochakian

I'M LOOKING forward to The New York Times Book Review of *What Our Mothers Didn't Tell Us: Why Happiness Eludes the Modern Woman*.

I'm assuming a feminist of some stature will be reviewing it. It could be a wait, though, because this wicked little book just might detonate in the campus mail room. Danielle Crittenden's argument is that while feminism has given women freedom, it's also brought women very real pain—"problems of freedom."

Crittenden is happy to say plainly what others dare not suggest. She says women, in pursuing sexual independence, have traded away the very things that make them the happiest. She says most women want a husband and children, yet they are trained to focus on having a career and never becoming dependent on a man; that women's obsession with establishing an "identity" and a "self" are inimical to acquiring a family.

She points out the truth that women are loath to admit: Women have "sexual power" (for a time), and it ought not be squandered. That the longer a woman postpones marriage, the less her market value. "Very few 35-year-old women have the sexual power over men that they had at 25."

And it's not because men are bad or men are stupid or men have been taught by the culture to value only young, attractive women. It's biology. (Yeah, it's not fair. It's only true.) OK, I was a leftist at the University of Wisconsin in the '70s. A leftist whose career plan was to catch a man. I now see. So to this evader of consciousness-raising groups (their clothes were just so ugly), Crittenden makes plenty of sense.

At the outset, this appeared to be yet another book by a privileged woman for other privileged women worried over whether they should stay home with the tots or keep career-ing—one of those books that's stupid in the way only a sophisticated, educated, probably East Coast woman can be stupid.

Geez, haven't we gotten beyond Me and My Career, this veteran thought. But Crittenden goes way beyond.

She says the real reason women work when they could be home with their kids is not that they're all selfish yuppies, although there are those, but because they just can't depend on husbands anymore. Feminism gave men carte blanche to be irresponsible.

She points out that young women are blind to the conse-

quences of their sexuality. "If we insist upon our right to lead sexually unconstrained lives into our 30s and beyond, then we have to accept that there will be consequences to the long-term stability of all marriages, and even to our own ability to marry." As our elders would say, why should he buy the cow when he's getting the milk for free? And she is merciless.

For example: "The happiest memoirs among the elders of the women's movement are by those who led the most conventionally female lives. They are the feminists who, despite all their resentments and chafing at family life, managed to keep it and savor its rewards in later life. Meanwhile, Gloria Steinem, alone in her 50s, devotes herself to writing a book about finding self-esteem."

Crittenden does tip to excess at times. It's unreasonable and mean for her to say that single women have unhappy, self-centered lives.

And regarding those observations of fortyish moms at the playground—well, never mind, they're funny. "Here they were, yanked out of their plush offices and forced to surrender their Italian leather briefcases for diaper bags bulging with enough supplies to get them through a week-long emergency evacuation."

But her point—that women are wrong to pretend they're like men—is something a whole lot of people haven't yet noticed. It's like this: Men need women; women need men. They strike this bargain.

LA Times—Washington Post News Service

## Orchids can double your pleasure

By Karol V. Menzie

HERE'S SOMETHING you probably didn't know about orchids: These days, lots of them are cloned. Just like those sheep in Scotland, only more of them. You could look at a million of the dancing lady orchid, *Oncidium "Gower Ramsey,"* for instance, and they would all be genetically identical.

Here's something else you probably didn't know: They're not all that hard to grow. A little bright light, a little heat, a little humidity, a little water, that's all it takes. If you can manage African violets, you can grow orchids.

Not astonished yet? Here's the clincher. Orchids are not all that outrageously expensive anymore. Oh, sure, you can spend \$500 or \$1,000 for a rare breeding plant, or as much as \$25,000 for an extremely rare specimen. But more common orchids, including the clones, can cost as little as \$20. A baby plant, one that hasn't flowered yet, can cost just \$4. If you attend an auction, you may even find a bargain. "We sold some boxed lots, 10 plants to a box, for \$20," said Cyrus Swett, who is treasurer of the Maryland Orchid Society, and an avid collector. And by the way, "common" is not entirely a misnomer: Orchids are the largest family of flowering plants on Earth.

They grow everywhere, except the North and South Poles. There are orchids that are native to every state in the union. Maryland is the habitat of the yellow *Cypripedium*, or terrestrial lady's-slipper, which grows in Oregon Ridge, and the pink *Cypripedium*, which has been found near Severna Park.

Common as they are, however, orchids are still associated with some pretty exotic households. There are orchids named for Nancy Reagan, Elizabeth Taylor and Diana, Princess of Wales.

According to *Vogue* magazine, it was fashion designer Halston who, in the early '80s, irrevocably linked orchids and fashion when he placed masses of white *Phalaenopsis* on a coffee table. Before that, orchids were treated as rarities, and used sparingly.

The magazine cites designers Donna Karan and Geoffrey Beene, writer Joan Didion and

Rolling Stone magazine's Jann Wenner as orchid collectors.

No one knows for sure how many species of orchids there are in the world, the American Orchid Society estimates more than 25,000. There are two types: epiphytes, which means

and have been since collecting orchids became a major craze in the 19th century. Orchids are notoriously hard to replicate. Their seeds are microscopic, and many species seem reluctant to produce seed pods.

The development of orchid cloning in the

multimillions.

Whoever is growing them, there's a "grace and character" about orchids that makes them unique, says Thomas McBride, partner in the Little Greenhouse in Carney. "The thing that draws people is their own love for unusual things."

Unusual is certainly the word. Orchids come in mind-boggling array. There are orchids so small that it takes a magnifying glass to see the flowers, and orchids with masses of blooms as big as soccer balls. There are orchids that smell like candy bars, and orchids that smell like rotten meat. There are orchids that flower continuously, and orchids that flower for only a day.

There are orchids that look like shredded wheat, and orchids that look like shoes. Swett, who lives in Ellicott City, has about 300 plants, "in a little greenhouse on the side of the house."

The society has members who grow orchids on an indoor window sill and people who have huge greenhouses with 4,000 to 5,000 varieties.

Most people start with one of the easier-to-grow types, Swett says, such as *Phalaenopsis*, which tend to have larger, dogwood-shaped flowers, and may bloom continuously for as long as six months.

Other common varieties are: *Paphiopedilum*, a lady's-slipper type. *Oncidium*, also called dancing lady orchids because their petals resemble a dancer's swirling skirts. *Dendrobium*, which look a little like a columbine. *Cattleya*, those corsage orchids. *Cymbidium*, which are more leafy and have spikes of cup-shaped flowers.

Southgate "Bud" Hammond, of Uppercroft, is an avid collector who has 600 plants of 50 different species in his 14-foot-by-30-foot greenhouse.

It's hard to stop collecting, he says. "Every time you buy a different plant," he says, "you expect something wonderful and exotic."

After all, people are driven to collect all sorts of things, muses McBride, of the Little Greenhouse. "Orchids," he says, "can be very addictive."

LA Times—Washington Post News Service



tree-dwelling; and terrestrial, which grow in rotten bark or leaf mold on forest or jungle floors. Most wild orchids are protected under the 1975 Convention of International Trade in Endangered Species, or CITES, which outlaws trade in them.

Cultivated orchids, however, are hot items.

middle of this century has been a major boon to orchid fanciers, and has democratized the hobby. "Everybody grows orchids," says Merritt Huntington, co-owner (with his son Thomas) of Kensington Orchids in Kensington, a major orchid supplier in the mid-Atlantic. "We had a plumber, we have

## When the girls go shopping, empires can crumble

By Susan Reimer

IF THE current crop of teen girls marry the way they shop, they are going to make Elizabeth Taylor look like the town's old maid!

I have watched with head-snapping amazement as my 12-year-old daughter and her posse of mall dolls shift their devotion from store to store as if they were on 30-minute spending sprees.

Talk about your brand loyalty. Not. These girls cruise the mall in hyper-drive, setting trends as they go and leaving a wake of red ink behind them. Each will

spend more than \$800 a year on clothes, according to national surveys by Leo J. Shapiro and Associates, and that gives them the Midas touch.

But it is impossible to track their taste because they can't say why they like what they like, and it doesn't matter anyway, because they will like something else in six weeks.

"You can be assured of one thing—fickleness is here to stay," says Kurt Barnard, a retail consultant and president of Barnard's Retail Trend Report in Upper Montclair, NJ. "They jilted Lim-

ited Too and other stores like it. And they will jilt Old Navy and Abercrombie & Fitch someday. There is no defense against them, and you never know what is going to be their next stop."

A girl gives a store window about three seconds to catch her attention, retail experts say, and she is simultaneously chatting like mad with her friends.

"She is not a customer with patience," says Howard Davidowitz, chairman of Davidowitz & Associates, a national retail consulting firm. "And she can't say what she wants except that

she wants a store that is focused on her. That's why she hates department stores. "And once you lose your touch, you are 'boring' and 'yuck,' and you can't get it back. This is not a rational process."

I don't think I washed the bell-bottom jeans once before Jessie moved on to button-fly, boot-cut jeans. And "stone-washed" and "sand-blasted" have given way to "rinsed." Can you imagine trying to make a living selling to this group?

The Limited, among the first to lay a trap for young teens with its Limited Too,

lost its hold on this group when it went with '70s retro stuff. Saw-reeeee. The girls had already moved on to the earth tones and outdoor look of American Eagle Outfitters or the great prices at Old Navy.

Look out, Old Navy. Girls love a bargain, but Abercrombie & Fitch has high-decibel rock music that drives grown-ups out of the store and sexy, oversized posters of the college kids young teens aspire to be. Young girls are already hanging out there, and A&F was on everybody's Christmas list. As soon as they get

enough money for its pricey, thrift-shop look, they will be shopping there.

And in the ultimate expression of "voting with their feet," teen girls are abandoning athletic-shoe stores because they want to be seen in Doc Martens and Steve Maddens.

Here's what you have to do when a 12-year-old girl has declared your store to be yuck, boring. The Limited bought Abercrombie & Fitch, which used to be a stuffy English clothier, and retooled it by stealing the look of the Calvin Klein fragrance ads.

Now A&F is suing American Eagle for stealing its color combinations and its marketing scheme.

Meanwhile, A&F is trying to recapture the 10 to 14-year-old set that Limited Too lost by testing a new store, abercrombie. And the Gap is insulated from obsolescence by owning Old Navy and Banana Republic. When I told Jessie about this retail "chain," she asked if Claire's boutique had them in silver.

LA Times—Washington Post News Service

● The Amman Marriott Hotel hosted a VIP Group of television and print journalists from January 2 to 6, 1999, as part of the familiarization trip to the region. During their stay, the group was taken to several areas of Jordan. The tour included Daba'a, Mukheibeh, Petra, Ajloun and other areas. The Amman Marriott catering team produced beautiful food selections in the most inaccessible areas, from Black-tie service in the vastness of Wadi Rum to omelets in a cave inside Petra. The picture shows Daba'a Castle after being transformed into an authentic Jordanian home.



## Regional manager of the year Top award goes to Jordanian returning home to open new hotel in Amman

DUBAI—Holiday Inn's general manager of the year in the Middle East and Africa for 1998 is Ismail Hassan, who is preparing to open one of the global hotel operator's new wave of properties in the region, after a highly successful ten-year spell with the full service brand.

The former general manager of Holiday Inn hotels in Bahrain, Oman and Saudi Arabia, whose latest posting took him back to his native Jordan, was honored at a recent awards ceremony in Amsterdam.

Hassan, who recently took charge of the Holiday Inn Amman, opening in March, received the prestigious manager of the year award from Ravi Saligram, president of Holiday Inn International.

In his previous position as general manager of the Min-hal Holiday Inn in Riyadh, Hassan supervised a major modernization programme, which earned the hotel the company's international modernization award for two successive years, as well as two prestigious Torchbearer Awards recognizing high standards of service, quality and excellence.

Over the last few months he prepared staff at the 240-room



Ismail Hassan (left) receives his general manager of the year award from Ravi Saligram, president of Holiday Inn International.

Holiday Inn Amman, located in the emerging business district of Tilaa Al-Ali, for its official opening.

The hotel has an executive floor with 22 rooms and 18 suites, a business center, an extensive multi-purpose hall divisible into three, and three meeting rooms. The hotel's fitness club has separate access for members, and a range of outlets, including a coffee shop, specialty restaurant, and large themed restaurant and bar, open on to outside terraces.

The hotel is one of 14 under development in the Middle East by Holiday Inn, which currently operates 13 hotels and resorts in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, and Egypt. Three other new Holiday Inn hotels will open shortly in Dubai, Beirut, and the Egyptian resort of Sharm El Sheikh.

## Mahmoud Al Ramahi Medical Award goes to Dr Fatthiah Al Sa'udi

THE 1998 MAHMOUD AL RAMAHI Medical Award (MRMA) was granted to Dr. Fatthiah Al Sa'udi.

The announcement was made last month in Washington, DC. Dr. Sa'udi was chosen from 70 nominated doctors. The Award Committee in Jordan will hold a ceremony at the end of this month to grant Dr. Sa'udi the award. Around 100 doctors and colleagues are invited to attend the event.

Dr. Sa'udi is a pediatrician working in her private clinic in Amman. She obtained her degree from the University of Paris in France.

During her career, Dr. Sa'udi worked in both public and private sectors. She also worked with many local, Arab and international institutions. She participated in many international medical conferences concerning health and human rights. Dr. Sa'udi has several publications and translations in the field of medicine and social issues.

In 1996, Dr. Sa'udi won "The Prince Hassan Ben Talal Award for Scientific Excellence" for her translation of the exceptional medical reference titled "The Normal Child". A year later, she won the French Legion of Merit from President Jacques Chirac, to honor her dedicated and extensive work in the Jordanian-French Medical Association. The Association holds joint meetings and conferences between Jordanian and French doctors.

The Mahmoud Al Ramahi Award is an initiative which



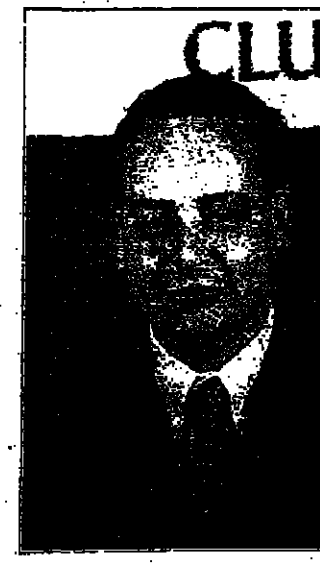
Dr. Fatthiah Al Sa'udi

was started by the family of the late Dr. Al Ramahi, who died in a tragic car accident in the United States four years ago. His relatives and friends decided to establish the award in order to commemorate Dr. Ramahi's distinguished and long work in the field of medicine.

Dr. Ramahi worked at the Royal Medical Services for nine years, before leaving to the US

where he specialized in Family Medicine. The award, however, is granted annually to those working in the health sector, both in Palestine and Jordan.

The award is an opportunity for the winner to work on a health project or research of benefit to the local society, which is to be presented later at a medical conference in the US.



## Daniel Ennor "takes the controls" at British Airways in Jordan

BRITISH AIRWAYS appointed Mr. Daniel Lewis Ennor as manager of its office in Amman. Mr. Ennor assumed his duties in December, 1998. He took over from Mark Hodson, who took up a new managerial position at the new state-of-the-art, Heathrow based Waterside Park.

Commenting on his new position, Mr. Ennor said: "I am really pleased to work with the British Airways team in Amman. I am glad to have the chance to continue with my contribution to the airline. I believe the prospects for growth and prosperity in the fields of business, travel and tourism in the region are quite promising. We are ready to meet the requirements of development in those fields."

Mr. Ennor brings with him a wide-ranging experience through his work in customer services operations and sales around the UK and abroad, including a private pilot's license.

our pleas

JANUARY 1999  
A special section offering  
fresh perspectives on  
global issues prepared for  
The Star

# THE WORLD PAPER

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Markets without regulation proving a real shock to capitalism

## Economically blessed are the institution builders

By Grzegorz W. Kolodko

**S**HOCK THERAPY—a program of accelerated privatization and severe cuts in the public sector—is widely credited with setting post-communist Poland on the path to economic recovery. But the program was actually more shock than therapy. It was not until the country shifted to a policy best described as “therapy without shocks” that real progress was made.

This conclusion runs contrary to the conventional wisdom, enshrined in the “Washington consensus,” that shifting property rights and allocation decisions from the state to the private sector is, along with strict fiscal discipline, the key to economic success. For the approximately 30 countries trying to remake themselves in communism’s aftermath, however, a new consensus is emerging, one that emphasizes improving government rather than

The disconnect between the pace of the financial and political changes and the ability of institutions to cope is illustrated in the results posted by most formerly communist countries (see chart). After 7 to 9 years of transition, output in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is at about three quarters of the pre-transition level in 1989—the year used as a benchmark—while unemployment, poverty and income inequality continues to increase.

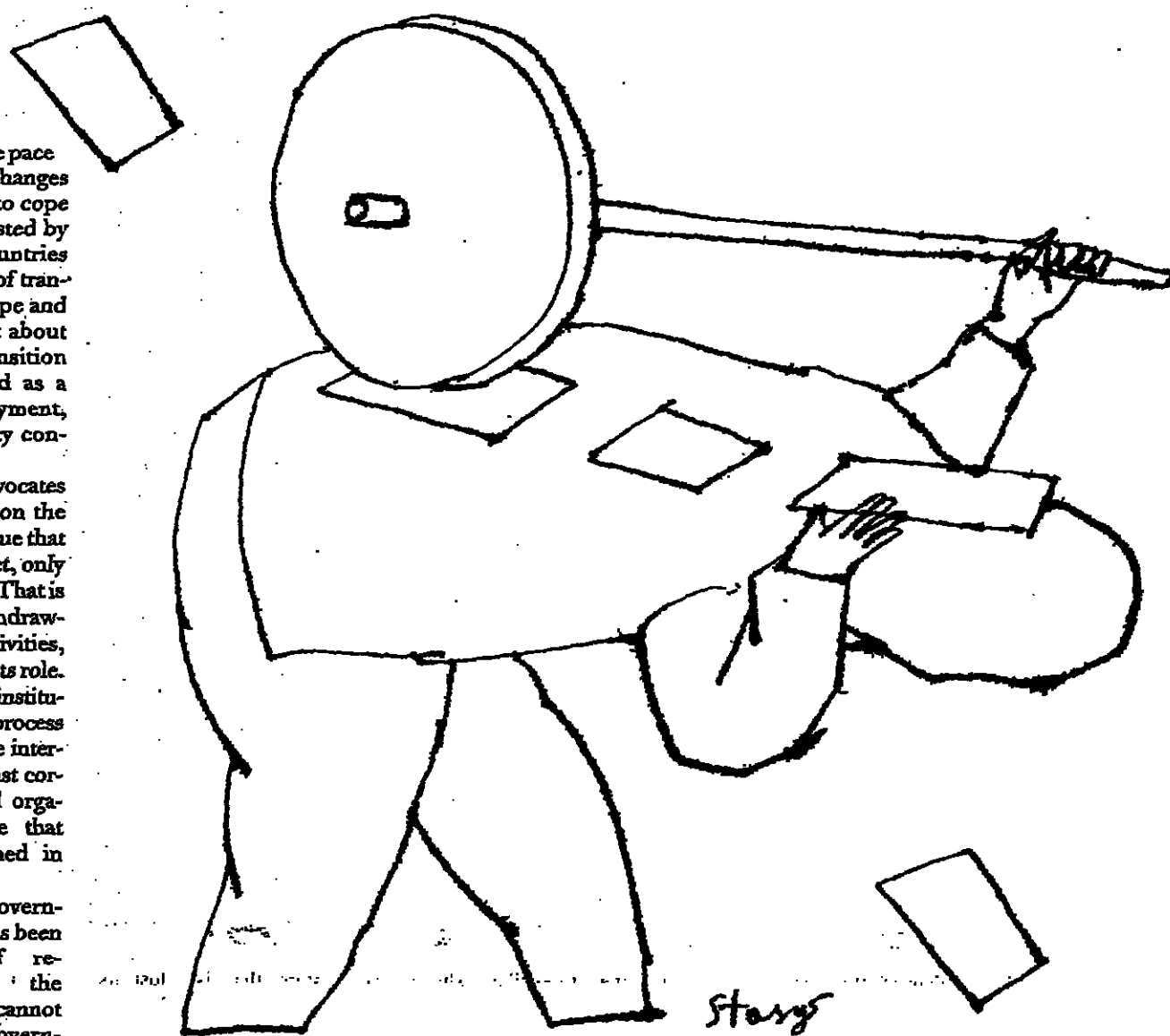
Despite these results, the advocates of policies and advice based on the Washington consensus still argue that the policies’ design was correct, only the implementation has failed. That is not true. Instead of hastily withdrawing the state from economic activities, policymakers need to redesign its role.

Without an active approach, institutions are created by an informal process characterized by narrow, private interests. The extreme case is the vast corruption and organized crime that has flourished in Russia.

With a government that has been starved of resources—the point that it cannot pay many government employees—this vast country has been unable to prevent the informal, black market system from overshadowing its fledgling market economy. Thus, the “market” in Russia works in a way where the profits are privatized but the losses are socialized—in the long run a politically unsustainable approach.

Based on these lessons and the recent experience with the Southeast Asian crises, the outline of a new, emerging consensus—the post-Washington consensus—can be drawn. It stresses both the need for free markets and a new role for the state in developing the institutions needed to make those markets work. Rather than tearing down the old institutions as soon as possible, the new consensus calls for their gradual reform and favors waiting until the transition is complete.

**Rather than tearing down the old institutions as soon as possible, the new consensus calls for their gradual reform and favors waiting until the transition is complete before paring them back**



► Institution building. It’s the new global mantra, chanted by mandarins and moneymen alike, for warding off economic collapse. But these two words have an infinite number of interpretations, from local NGO advocates to unrepentant communists who dream of a return to complete state control. Is there substance to this mantra, or is simply code for more bureaucracy?

before paring them back. Again, based on the Polish experience, countries that do not dismantle their institutions wholesale have recovered sooner, their growth is robust and it is sustainable. Countries that hoped the market would take care of building the necessary institutions are lagging behind.

Within this new consensus, there

are several important policy considerations. One of them is simple: some institutions are more important than others. Those that govern the public finance system and oversee the legal aspects of the market economy are perhaps the two most important.

The establishment and development of the new laws—trade and tax code, capital market regulation, property rights protection, competition and anti-trust rules, banking supervision, consumers’ protection and environmental safeguards—is a more urgent need in transition economies than the privatization of state assets. Without a culture for commercial law and a mechanism for enforcing contracts, an economy cannot “take off.”

Speed is another important policy consideration. Institution building is—and should be—a gradual process. This is especially true when it comes to integrating with the global economy. It is better to liberalize capital markets after domestic institutions are strong enough to cope with the inevitable ups and downs, otherwise people in post-socialist societies are not going to support market mechanisms and integration with the world economy—in extreme cases, they may be actively hostile.

Looking beyond the big, national institutions is another key to success. Institution building should not be interpreted simply as the creation of central banks and new national agencies. Money and effort should also go towards accelerating the development of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the third indispensable pillar of contemporary market economies and civic societies. There are things government does badly and things the private has no interest in doing. Where these things overlap, it is vital that NGOs step in.

► BLESSED ARE NEXT PAGE

► No winners in a nobody-in-charge system

By Harlan Cleveland

**Y**OU ECONOMISTS! When are you going to learn that in order to have a really “free” market, it has to be regulated?

These words came from then Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel’s favorite economist, Rita Klimova, during a visit to Minnesota in the early 1990s. The conversation with a group of business executives and academic experts had been flowing amicably until one of them asked her what her government was doing to make sure the free market remained free. Then she blew up.

“We’re getting plenty of advice from American experts,” she said, with a tight smile. “They stay in our best hotels and tell us about the virtues of a free market. But we already understand about free markets. We’ve had black markets for years and years.”

“What our consultants don’t tell us,” said Klimova, “is what the government has to do to keep markets free. Why don’t Americans who come to Prague ever explain why, to make sure your markets remain free, you have an SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), an FDA (Food and Drug Administration) and an FTC (Foreign Trade Commission)?”

Today, her wise observations are more appropriate than ever. The unregulated capitalism Klimova was trying to harness is writ large on a global scale. It is truly a nobody-in-charge system, a flow of buying power, now worth a good deal more than US\$1 trillion a day, that has only a tenuous link with what ex-

► NOBODY-IN-CHARGE NEXT PAGE

Forgetting all politics is local

## Filipinos find themselves building foreign models

By Paulynn P. Sicam

**I**NSTITUTION BUILDING is the watchword in Asia today, a region where political and financial structures have crumbled in the wake of the current crisis. Aided by international development funds, countries across the region are reinventing themselves by building institutions to replace the old, failed and discredited ones—and hopefully, strengthening democracy in the process.

Examples abound: ► In post-Suharto Indonesia, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are working feverishly to build a civil society with democratic institutions that will constructively channel the people’s misplaced and often violent energies.

► The arrest and trial of Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy of Malaysian strongman Mahathir Mohamad, has fast-tracked the growth of a political opposition—a virtual parliament of the streets—in a country where protest was virtually non-existent. ► In Thailand, NGOs are collaborating with government to lay the ground-

work for more democracy by helping write a new constitution and drafting laws creating democratic institutions. Among these proposed institutions is a human rights commission.

► People’s organizations, local NGOs, and international funding agencies are working in the Philippines with its government to strengthen the foundations of this newly restored democracy. They are also working to share its lessons with its neighbors.

► Even the generals who rule Myanmar, better known as Burma, have been holding dialogues with politicians, academics and civil society leaders from various ASEAN countries to learn about the benefits of democratization and free speech.

All very positive. It seems almost ungrateful to ask the question: Are there new goods on the shelves, or is this just a different display in the shop window?

The politics of prodding

The question has to be asked because national governments are not really leading the charge. Rather, they are being prodded forward. Behind most of these initiatives to expand democracy in Asia are international funding

► FOREIGN MODELS NEXT PAGE

### FROM ALL STATE TO NO STATE: POST-COMMUNIST TRANSITION ECONOMIES, 1990-97

Countries ranked in order of average GDP growth 1989-97

	Year of GDP decline	Did GDP fall again after recovery?	Average rate of GDP growth 1990-93	94-97	98-97	1997 GDP index (1989=100)
Poland	2	no	-3.1	6.3	1.6	111.8
Slovakia	3	no	-3.9	4.0	0.0	99.3
Czech Republic	3	no	-4.3	3.6	-0.4	95.8
Slovenia	4	no	-6.8	6.3	-0.3	95.6
Hungary	4	no	-4.8	2.5	-1.1	90.4
Uzbekistan	5	no	-3.1	-0.3	-1.7	86.7
Romania	4	yes	-6.4	2.1	-2.2	82.4
Albania	4	yes	-8.8	4.9	-2.0	79.1
Estonia	5	no	-9.7	4.1	-2.8	77.9
Croatia	4	no	-9.9	3.0	-3.4	73.3
Belarus	6	no	-5.4	-2.6	-4.0	70.8
Bulgaria	6	yes	-7.4	-3.6	-5.5	62.8
Kyrgyzstan	5	no	-9.3	-2.4	-5.8	58.7
Kazakhstan	6	no	-6.7	-6.0	-6.3	58.1
Latvia	4	yes	-13.8	2.2	-5.8	56.8
Macedonia	6	no	-12.9	-0.8	-6.9	55.1
Russia	7	no	-10.1	-5.3	-7.7	52.2
Turkmenistan	7	no	-4.5	-12.5	-8.5	48.3
Lithuania	5	no	-18.3	0.5	-8.9	42.8
Armenia	4	no	-21.4	5.4	-8.0	41.1
Azerbaijan	6	no	-14.5	-5.7	-10.1	40.5
Tajikistan	7	no	-12.2	-8.4	-10.3	40.0
Ukraine	8	no recovery	-10.1	-12.1	-11.1	38.3
Moldova	7	no	-12.6	-10.2	-11.4	35.1
Georgia	5	no	-24.1	2.9	-10.6	34.3

CHART COMPILED BY GRZEGORZ W. KOLODKO

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05.1.1999



## REINSTITUTING THE MARKET

## FOREIGN MODELS

Continued from previous page

agencies. Their mission is to help build institutions that transform formal democracies to substantive ones. While such interventions—and funds—are generally appreciated by the countries that are targeted, they must be channeled towards projects and programs that stem from the real needs of their intended beneficiaries. Otherwise, all they do is cloak the problems they are aimed at in an illusion of activity.

Political economist and university professor Walden Bello calls institution building an "intellectual fashion," much like the "neutral technocracy" that the World Bank once thought existed in the Tiger economies of Asia and underpinned their remarkable growth. These neutral technocracies were supposed to have insulated economic decision making from political interests, explains Bello. Based on this supposition, investors began to regard Asia as "the land of permanent bonanza."

## Crony capitalism

After July 1997, however, the bottom fell out of the Asian economy, and

a new intellectual fashion—"crony capitalism"—was born, says Bello. Actually, crony capitalism was not new. Filipinos had coined the term in the 1980s to describe the collusion between their dictator President Ferdinand Marcos and his close coterie of friends and relatives, an unholy alliance that controlled the economy and enjoyed access to behest loans guaranteed by the Philippine government. But crony capitalism was found to have been also endemic in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and South Korea where corruption was, after all, the norm.

The response of the World Bank, the IMF, the Asian Development Bank and other international financial institutions to corruption has been to build institutions for good government (another intellectual fashion) that encourage transparency, accountability and participative decision making in these countries.

While welcoming any national programs aimed at eradicating corruption, Bello points out that these are not necessarily what the region needs to counteract the effects of the financial crisis. After all, corruption co-existed quite well with the growth of the Tiger economies. What the region needs, according to Bello, are international institutions that would regulate speculative capital and other investment flows that have wreaked havoc on Asian economies.

Filipino NGOs likewise have mixed feelings about institution building initiated by international development agencies. Because even foreign donors know that it would be a big error to build institutions from the outside, local NGOs are sought after as partners in the delivery of development programs. Generally, international agencies prefer to work with them, rather than with government, whether it is to do battle with poverty, reform existing institutions like the police, establish human rights systems, or promote empowerment and democratization through education and training.

## The pro-poor bandwagon

Danilo Songco, who chairs the Code-NGO coalition in the Philippines, ob-

serves that these days the fashionable issue for funders is poverty, mainly because it is the proclaimed focus of the Estrada government. "Even business wants to be pro-poor now," Songco says.

Good intentions, however, are only the first step. Even the more enlightened foreign agencies can misperceive the problems that they want to help resolve. They may conclude, for example, that poverty is caused by government's poor system of allocating resources, which results in low productivity. While this is not entirely wrong, Songco points out, "what is glossed over is patronage, a political system that perpetuates the situation. Recognizing this is as important as addressing the immediate needs of the poor."

Governments also tend to go about building institutions in the wrong way. For example, when government organizes the community—which is not its function—the result is all too often a new form of patronage, not an organization that works to the benefit of all its members.

Songco gives the example of a government bank that organizes cooperatives so it can lend out funds. But, he pointed out, "collection efficiency is way below 50 percent because government usually resorts to fast track organizing, forgetting about process."

It is the role of NGOs to ensure that institutions evolve out of a particular need and are based on local realities. "A measure of Code-NGO's effectiveness," says Songco, "is how government or international institutions respond to what we communicate to them." It is important to NGOs that dialogue, which didn't happen even a decade ago, is taking place. "As long as there is a willingness to engage in a dialogue, and as long as it is taking place, there is hope."

Songco concedes, however, that dialogue doesn't always mean that correct policies, projects and institutions are being built. "It makes you feel good that they listen to you. But when you look around and see the policies, somehow, change is not taking place." □

## NOBODY-IN-CHARGE

Continued from previous page

change of goods and services we call "trade."

Most of this speculative capital is used to make large bets on what might happen in the future—tomorrow, next week, next month, next year. Some is "hedged" by deals designed to persuade the investor that escape will always be possible if the storm clouds look threatening. In fact, the system is not sustained by anything: not (since the early 1970s) by gold, or even by all the world's tradable goods and services, the "real" economy that supposedly underlies it but is not worth one-30th its face value.

"Face value" is a curiously appropriate term. Flows of this kind of money can only be sustained by the confidence of millions of investors that no one is getting unfairly ahead of the rest. Taking the system at face value is difficult these days. Even among the players, confidence is only sustained by their sense that they can scurry for the exits just before everybody else does.

This nobody-in-charge system is much too big, the players far too many, the stakes too high, and the game too fast to be controlled by any one person, committee, nation, alliance, or international organization. Yet its results are so manifestly unfair, and its practical workings render the value of money (and thus of everything measured in money) so unpredictable, that both the impoverished and the temporarily affluent players are beginning to mutter a surprising mantra: "We need new institutions."

New institutions? What's wrong with the public institutions we already have—the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the governments of the seven richest countries (G-7) and the World Bank.

The short answer is that neither the IMF nor the G-7 has been promoting either fairness or predictability. So nearly everyone involved or impacted is at best dissatisfied and at worst disaffected, disempowered, and disloyal.

The IMF was created in 1944 to manage a post-World War II money market designed to be both fair and predictable by fixing the rates of exchange among all the national currencies that mattered. But that system collapsed in the early 1970s, leaving the world's currencies to float.

In a world of "floating" currencies, IMF's allegiance still lay with sound money. It naturally intervenes on the side of the Ministry of Finance when nations come to it for help. If that means deflation and no-growth for the time being, that's too bad: the IMF's job is to balance budgets and prop up currency values, not to worry about unemployment, poverty, economic growth, and social development.

The G-7 to the rescue? Hardly. The financial authorities of the richer countries mostly share the IMF's mindset.

That leaves the World Bank, which was invented at the same Bretton Woods conference that launched the IMF. The

Michel Chossudovsky, an economist at the University of Ottawa, calls the new \$90 billion "a Marshall Plan for institutional speculators."

What is really needed is a new framework of international institutions and a clear division of responsibilities:

► Public authorities should be responsible for collective standard-setting that establishes norms designed to assure fairness, encourage incentives for innovation and maximize the predictability of the value of money.

The norms developed by this new "global public sector" should cover both trade and monetary issues. Separating trade policy (which now includes bank-

ing, insurance, and foreign investment) from monetary policy no longer makes sense, if it ever did. The gulf between the two—different people from different national ministries, served by different international staffs, meeting in different cities—merely confirms and intensifies the detachment of money flows from the underlying flows of goods, services, capital investment,

and information. ► Acting within these agreed norms and standards, uncentralized, market-driven international business should be responsible for the actual exchange of goods and services, for the sharing of information and mutual learning and for the clearing of financial transactions.

At this open moment in world politics, free markets and political democracy have a good chance of becoming the dominant ideas of the 21st Century—if enough of us take seriously Klimova's reminder. Free markets are going global fast. Inventing the institutions of the "global public sector" had better be put on track, too. □

HARLAN CLEVELAND, A FORMER US AMBASSADOR TO NATO, IS PRESIDENT OF THE WORLD ACADEMY OF ART AND SCIENCE.



Opening the floodgates for speculative capital: knocking down the Berlin Wall in 1989

Bank, however, thinks of itself as a development agency, and has recently been distancing itself from the IMF (which is not easy since their buildings are across the street from each other in Washington, D.C.). It is still constrained by its mindset as a lending institution—and by its need to raise part of its funds in the private money market—but the World Bank can nevertheless play a crucial role in a future that focuses more on economic and social development than on rescuing affluent lenders from bad business judgments.

The World Bank's progress notwithstanding, the need for a fresh start remains. Even the leaders of the G-7 are aware of this. Late in October, US President Bill Clinton announced a G-7 proposal to set up a \$90 billion fund "to help protect vulnerable but essentially healthy nations" from stock market and currency speculation.

The amount is huge—roughly equal in purchasing power to what the Marshall Plan invested in European recovery from 1948 to 1952. Its primary beneficiaries, however, would not be the impoverished hundreds of millions in the "rescued" countries. Such funds as these are, for the most part, devices to "make whole" the banks and investors who placed their bets on high returns and were disappointed in the results.

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## King expected to name son as Crown Prince

Continued from page 1

ment gives the Monarch the prerogative to name his eldest son or one of his brothers as heir.

His Majesty's transparency is part of his dedication and efforts to secure a better future for Jordan and the region at large, analysts say.

Speculations about replacing Prince Hassan as heir with one of King Hussein's sons have been circulating since his return to the country. News especially spread out following an article published by the Arab magazine *Al Wasat* titled "Prince Hamza is the King of Jordan". The magazine pointed to alleged meetings held between American officials and King Hussein concerning the future of the Kingdom and the Hashemite leadership.

However, the news were denied when the Royal Court announced that "His Majesty stressed that all news about his meetings with American officials regarding the future of Jordan are baseless since no one knows what the King will do."

Prince Hamza, 18, who was by the King's bedside during the last six month period of treatment, is currently employed at Britain's Sandhurst Military Academy.

Prince Abdallah is popular within the armed forces, where he serves as head of the elite Special Military Forces.

The King's "review" which includes the appointment of a new successor to the Throne, is one of the important aspects of political reform," Dr Labib Qamhawi, a well-known political analyst, told *The Star*. "The country is facing crucial challenges, mainly the economic stagnation, which is linked to institutionalized corruption. To tackle the problem, we need firm political decisions," Qamhawi said.

"Palestinians, Israelis and Americans are interested in what will happen regarding political reform in Jordan," he added.

because of the country's impact on the whole region," he added.

"Jordan's stance towards the Iraqi problem in particular, and its relations with Arab countries, in general, are issues which will have a regional impact on the Kingdom," he concluded.

All in all, "I believe Jordanians will be comfortable to see Prince Abdallah as a successor under the guidance of the King," Qamhawi explained.

According to new reports, the second possible candidate is Prince Hamza, the first son by the King's marriage to Her Majesty Queen Noor.

"Obviously, the succession will affect the general status of the Kingdom," Dr Saeed Thyab, Secretary General of the Jordan Popular Unity Party, said. "Yet, it's up to His Majesty alone to choose the most qualified person," Dr Thyab added.

"I will come to a decision at the appropriate time," King Hussein said the day after he arrived in Amman last week, speaking in a CNN interview with Christiane Amanpour.

"Poverty and unemployment are problems, which resulted from the lack of a credible administration that would carry out Jordan's affairs," said Dr Abdellatif Arabeyat, Secretary General of the Islamic Front Action.

However, Arabeyat strongly believes that "reforms must re-activate the Constitution, as a step towards securing and granting freedom of expression represented by the electoral and press and publications laws."

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"We are facing very tough times in Jordan these days. Prices are increasing rapidly and unexpectedly while the demand is decreasing. We hope that His Majesty's return will bring things back to normal and there will be a reduction of taxes and custom duty," Mukbil believes that if His Royal Highness Prince Abdallah is named Crown Prince, he will continue in his father's foot steps.

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His Majesty King Hussein speaking to the press upon his arrival

## ...People also speak out

By Lubna Khader  
Star Staff Writer

FOLLOWING HIS Majesty King Hussein's return home, Jordanians all over the Kingdom started to evaluate the situation in Jordan in the near future. The man in the street has several aspirations especially in regard to the tough economic and political situation that Jordan and the whole region is going through.

Talal Mukbil, a supermarket owner in Jabal Al Hussein said "we are facing very tough times in Jordan these days. Prices are increasing rapidly and unexpectedly while the demand is decreasing. We hope that His Majesty's return will bring things back to normal and there will be a reduction of taxes and custom duty."

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## Future economic perspectives

Continued from page 1

"Amman Financial Market (AFM) is one of the main sectors that were directly affected by the recession. The trading volume dropped down during the King's absence," added Al Waked. However, the AFM's recent session on Saturday, 23 January, witnessed a slight rise after the King's homecoming, which reached JD 1.5 million with a two percent jump.

Despite that the trade deficit increased in large amounts during the past year, the dinar regained its stability, as some tend to say.

Munir Hamarneh, an economic expert and professor at the University of Jordan, stated that the dinar will remain stable as long as the King is in power. "King Hussein's leadership is the main ingredient of our economy as well as our national currency," he told *The Star*.

Dr Hamarneh said that economic recession in Jordan is three years old. On the other hand, Dr Hamarneh said that the government should take advantage from the current changes and stimulate new schemes to decrease unemployment and poverty levels in the Kingdom.

"We can't just endure the increasing levels of poverty in Jordan," stressed Hamarneh.



Dr Hamarneh



Dr Al Waked

The question remains whether the upcoming political changes in Jordan will affect the economy negatively? "For sure not," answered Dr Al Waked.

"King Hussein will not do anything that might harm the national economy. All in all, I think that Jordanians are well aware that these changes will be for a better future."

Thank God for His Majesty's Safe Homecoming



Jordan Export Development & Commercial Centers Corporation

**Amman bloomed with your awaited return**

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Hail to Jordan on His Majesty's recovery and safe return home where he remains the benevolent leader, father and brother of Jordan



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